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1 April 2008

European Patent Application 06 011 951.8-2305, division of 02 777 919.8
Title: Information processing apparatus and method
Applicant: Olympus Corporation
Your ref.: 02S1099P2D2 - Our ref.: EPA-98 912

Dear Mr. Uchimura,

We enclose a copy of the Extended Search Report recently issued by the European Patent Office (EPO) for this application, together with copies of the cited documents. As you may see, the Search Report includes a written opinion from the Examiner on the patentability of the claimed invention. The written opinion is drafted much like a typical Office Action. However, please note that a response to the written opinion is not mandatory. Its purpose is to facilitate a well-informed evaluation of the prospects of the application by the applicant.

Although no response to the written opinion is required, a response may be filed and this may shorten the overall duration of the proceeding. The Examiner will then consider the response when taking up the file for substantive examination. Without a response the Examiner will simply issue a first Office Action that looks the same as the written opinion.

Two of the publications mentioned in the search report have been marked "X" by the EPO. The Search Examiner deems these citations to fully anticipate the subject matter of claims 1 and 7.

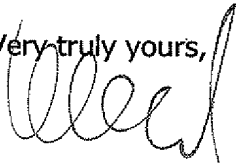
The Examiner has cited four documents under category "A" (technological background). These documents should therefore be of minor interest.

We refrain from further comments at this point. Should you wish us to study the citations in detail and provide an analysis of their significance to the patentability of the invention,

and/or to draft a complete response to the written opinion, please instruct us accordingly. Any comments regarding the differences between the invention and the cited art and the technical advantages arising therefrom would be highly appreciated in this case.

The European Patent Office will shortly publish the search report.

Very truly yours,



Dr. Axel von Hellfeld

Enclosures

Extended European Search Report with citations
Debit note in dupl.